



First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Weekly Update to the state Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) – April 13, 2015

FirstNet News

- The agenda for the 2015 SPOC Meeting in Reston, April 14-15, has been finalized, designed to allow for significant discussion. 132 representatives from 53 states and territories and eight Tribal Working Group members have confirmed attendance, along with Board Members Douglas and McGinnis.
- This week FirstNet will also be participating in the Broadband Communities Summit in Austin, Texas, several meetings and events with the Congressional Fire Services Institute in Washington DC, the National Volunteer Fire Council Board meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group in Boise, Idaho. We will finish the week with the Telecommunications Industry Association 16th Annual Spring Policy Summit in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland.
- Last week, FirstNet presented during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Webinar, and was in Boulder, Colorado for two days of workshops with the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Task Team on priority and pre-emption and public safety grade.
- Members of the User Advocacy Team, including Board Vice Chair Johnson, participated in the APCO Western Regional Conference sessions in Sacramento. Chief Johnson kicked off the conference with a keynote address. The conference included four additional FirstNet sessions that covered a FirstNet update, best practices and lessons being learned in outreach and consultation, a technical session on the unique features of the nationwide public safety broadband network and finally, a discussion about planning for FirstNet and Next Generation 9-1-1.
- We conducted the initial consultation meeting with Missouri on Wednesday, April 7 with more than 45 public safety stakeholders in attendance. We have now held 20 consultation meetings involving more than 1,300 participants from the states and territory. An updated schedule can be viewed on the [website tracker](#).
- To date, FirstNet has received 50 of 56 completed consultation checklists. Confirmed upcoming initial consultation meetings are: New York (4/20), North Carolina (4/23),

South Carolina (4/30), West Virginia (5/5), Louisiana (5/13), Arkansas (5/14), Virgin Islands (5/19), Maine (5/20), Idaho (5/21), Connecticut (5/27), New Hampshire (6/9), New Mexico (6/10), Ohio (6/11), Vermont (6/16), Kansas (6/17), Wisconsin (6/18), California (6/23-25), Illinois (7/14), Alabama (7/15), Georgia (7/21), Tennessee (7/23), Pennsylvania (8/4), Hawaii (8/11-12), American Samoa (8/13-14), Indiana (8/26), and New Jersey (9/3).

News from the States and PSAC Associations

- The PSAC Priority and Preemption and Public Safety Grade task teams met April 7-8 in Boulder, CO. Discussion items and next steps from those meetings will be reviewed in some of the breakout sessions during this week's SPOC meeting.
- The next association DC-based staff briefing on FirstNet will be held May 7 in Washington, DC.
- FirstNet Board Vice Chair Jeff Johnson spoke at the April 8 California Office of Emergency Services - (CalOES) meeting, held in conjunction with the Western Regional APCO Conference.
- The state of Iowa recently launched their new website with a great graphic of their outreach progress. Check it out at: <https://isicsb.iowa.gov/firstnet-outreach>

Media Watch

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Department of Commerce hyperlinks will direct you to websites that are not under the Government's control.

Traditional Media

There was significant media coverage again this week with respect to the suspension of the LA-RICS BTOP project. FirstNet has continued to coordinate with NTIA on messaging, including media outreach. In addition, the FirstNet Communications team has been reaching out to several media outlets to conduct one-on-one outreach calls, which are having an impact on the accuracy of several recent stories while amplifying the FirstNet

message. Other articles featuring FirstNet touched on the second public notice and FirstNet Outreach.

Cal OES: Cal OES Holds First Board Meeting of the Year for First Net at the APCO Western Regional Conference

<https://caloesnewsroom.wordpress.com/2015/04/08/cal-oes-holds-first-board-meeting-of-the-year-for-first-net-at-the-apco-national-conference/>

Providing emergency responders in California with the first nationwide, high-speed, wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. Leading California's public safety community is the California Governors Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Public Safety Communications for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) and First Responder Network Authority.

Mission Critical Magazine: FirstNet Release Second Public Notice Focusing on Opt-Out Issues

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODE/MissionCritical/Default.aspx?href=MCR%2F2015%2F04%2F01&pageno=12&view=document>

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) board approved for release a second public notice seeking comment on interpretations of FirstNet's enabling legislation if a state or territory opts out of having FirstNet deploy the state's radio access network (RAN). FirstNet Chair Sue Swenson said the public notice is necessary to determine how to maintain a balance of deploying a nationwide network while providing states with the option to take responsibility for their RANs. "Consultation on the complex issues in this second notice, combined with upcoming opportunities to receive feedback on the request for proposals (RFP) itself and our ongoing state and local consultations nationwide, create fundamental building blocks for our approach," she said.

Comms Daily: LA-RICS Problems Seen as Having Only Limited Implications for FirstNet Build

April 8, 2015

Problems encountered in California, which halted the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority's (LA-RICS) buildout of its network for first responders, likely don't presage difficulties elsewhere, public safety officials said Tuesday. Public safety officials said as much as anything, construction was stopped because of a dispute between the unions that represents police and firefighters and management.

The L.A. City Council and L.A. County Board voted to halt construction of portions of the network, and NTIA said Friday it's halting early buildout funding for the network (see 1504030061). In an effort to cut costs, LA-RICS had been placing tower facilities at police

and fire stations, which the unions criticized, alleging potential health consequences tied to radio-frequency exposure.

The root problem has nothing to do with safety, said a public safety official familiar with the issue. The fire union has been trying to get a contract for years without success and “threatened to waylay the whole LA-RICS project if they didn’t get a contract and that’s what they’ve done,” the official said. The discussion about RF emissions and safety is “bullshit,” the official said. The amount of emissions from the sites is less than what’s transmitted by a baby monitor, the official said.

Other public safety officials said they also have been told the labor dispute has caused problems for LA-RICS. But these officials said there are other lessons from LA-RICS’s experiences.

Andrew Seybold, a public safety consultant, said broader union issues aside, the problems that LA-RICS faced show the importance of doing outreach well ahead of installing any wireless facilities. “When LA-RICS showed up with the crew to install the towers, it was a complete surprise,” he said. “All of this could have been prevented if the LA-RICS folks had done what the carriers have been doing for a long time, proactively working with neighbors, schools, and officials on siting requests and getting in front of the issues.” The wireless carriers have always worked hard on outreach, Seybold said. “I think it’s lessons learned.” Seybold said that to the extent FirstNet is built in cooperation with the carriers, at existing cell sites, “it becomes a non-issue at that point.”

The difficulties facing LA-RICS likely don’t have significant implications for FirstNet’s nationwide deployment, said Bill Schrier, former chief technology officer of Seattle. “FirstNet, at this point, plans to build very few cell sites -- it intends to use as many commercial, not local-and-state government-owned, sites as possible,” Schrier said. The RF emissions issue is a “red herring,” Schrier said. “The matter has been investigated by a number of health authorities and the FCC. There is no validity to the claim.”

Jamie Barnett, lawyer at Venable and former chief of the FCC Public Safety Bureau, said some problems that cropped up in Los Angeles are healthy for the process of building FirstNet. “One of the purposes for the early deployments was to draw out the problems, work with them, deal with them, so that the nationwide launch could go that much smoother,” he said. But the bad part is that the work stoppage endangers funding and the network needs as much funding as possible, he said: “Stopping the work means we won’t learn other things as well.”

Barnett noted that outside of the public safety arena, RF issues always loom large on tower projects. But FCC rules don’t allow the use of RF issues as a reason for a local government’s blocking construction of a project, he noted. Carrier involvement in FirstNet construction could help, he said. Carriers know all the public relations issues and “they’ve dealt with them for years and years,” he said.

L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe, meanwhile, disputed fire and police unions' claims that the LA-RICS towers present a potential health hazard to public safety officers. "Until the unions got involved, this wasn't much of an issue," he said in an interview. "I think the scientific evidence on this is pretty clear that it's safer than a cellphone or a laptop sitting on your lap. And those are all really safe." The International Association of Firefighters Local 1014, which initially raised concerns about the exposure issue, said it continues to believe the towers would be a health risk to its members, with RF emissions presenting the potential to cause cancer, headaches, infertility, reduced memory function and sleep disorders.

Federal agencies and health organizations dispute the International Association of Firefighters Local 1014 claims. The FCC has said RF emissions from cell towers result in exposure levels at ground level that are thousands of times below federal safety limits, while federal agencies that classify cancer-causing agents haven't classified towers as a potential cause of cancer, the American Cancer Society said in a statement. The World Health Organization (WHO) said in a statement that "from all evidence accumulated so far, no adverse short- or long-term health effects have been shown to occur from the RF signals produced by base stations. Since wireless networks produce generally lower RF signals than base stations, no adverse health effects are expected from exposure to them." A CTIA spokeswoman cited the FCC and WHO policy statements, saying the association and wireless industry "have always been guided by science, and the views of expert organizations."

The real problem is the siting of the towers at fire stations in residential areas, Knabe said. "That's the issue we really need to work on, to see if we can put a system together that doesn't involve those particular stations." Knabe said he's optimistic the L.A. county and city governments can reach agreement with LA-RICS on a revised plan by the April 13 deadline. Knabe noted that he and the rest of the county Board of Supervisors will be part of an area delegation that will visit members of Congress in Washington, D.C., later this month to seek an extension of the Sept. 30 deadline for using NTIA Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grants for the project. The group may also meet with NTIA officials, Knabe said. FirstNet offers on its website a document answering basic questions about early builder networks like LA-RICS.

Web and Social Media

Social media engagement about FirstNet addressed LA-RICS, APCO Western Regional, as well as local outreach efforts in the states and territories. The FirstNet Twitter account has grown to over 2,010 followers; LinkedIn 647; Google+ 35; and YouTube has 98 subscribers. The team posted two new videos this week, including one on FirstNet Consultation and Outreach – which features several state SPOCs, Harlin McEwen from the PSAC, and Vice Chair Johnson. You can watch that video as well as other FirstNet videos on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FirstNetGov/videos>. Blogs this week included a recap of the Nebraska consultation, a recap of the April 2015 FirstNet Stakeholder Quarterly Webinar, and a full recap of FirstNet presentations at the IWCE 2015 conference. You can access all of the FirstNet blogs at: <http://www.firstnet.gov/newsroom/blog>